

Washington, DC - Congressmen Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Rob Andrews (D-NJ) today announced they will introduce a resolution (H.Con.Res 177) calling on the United States to explore alternative diplomatic solutions to the Iranian nuclear impasse -- including consideration of a quarantine on gasoline imported into Iran. Kirk and Andrew's announcement comes just a week after Iran's Guardian Council approved an order requiring Iran to develop nuclear technology, including uranium enrichment.

The Kirk-Andrews resolution calls for more aggressive American diplomatic support to the "European Union 3" (EU-3: United Kingdom, Germany and France) negotiations intended to end Iran's nuclear ambitions. Their resolution calls on allies and the U.S. to consider quarantining gasoline sales to Iran should the Iranians reject the European effort to end the nuclear impasse.

"Our European allies are quickly learning that carrots alone are not enough to encourage Iran to end her nuclear weapons program," said Congressman Kirk, a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations. "It's time for U.S. allies to push Iran's economic pressure points to increase the chance of success for the Europeans at the negotiating table."

"In the past few years, it has become increasingly clear that Iran has been developing nuclear technology. Further, they have violated previous agreements by denying IAEA access to inspection sights, continuing to work on nuclear centrifuges, and beginning construction on a heavy water nuclear reactor," said Andrews. "Although we hope for the best in the ongoing negotiations, I believe a gasoline quarantine would be an effective measure to expedite these negotiations."

Despite being one of the world's top oil producing nations, Iran is highly dependent on foreign gasoline due to severe mismanagement of its domestic energy supply. The need is so great that the Iranian government regularly debates rationing gasoline to manage its short supply. According to Kirk, an oil embargo on exports from Iran could hurt western economies but a gasoline quarantine on imports to Iran would fall heavily on Iran alone.

"A policy by western nations of boycotting gasoline sales to Iran would cripple its economy within weeks," Congressman Kirk said. "Scores of unemployed young Iranian workers would roam the streets of Tehran wondering why their government mismanaged the economy, costing

their jobs.” Last year, Iran increased its imports of foreign gasoline by 50 percent.

Kirk and Andrews said that a gasoline quarantine could help the European agreement to freeze Iran’s uranium program and further expand inspections to end Iran’s other nuclear ambitions.

Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and is also a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). International inspections of Iran’s nuclear program in 2003 and 2004 revealed significant undeclared activities with potential application for the development of nuclear weapons. In response, the European Union offered economic and political incentives to Iran to encourage Iran to fully comply with its non-proliferation commitments.

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